

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 415  
By Borchert

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Edgar Harrell for his heroic service during World War II.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Tennesseans continue this time-honored tradition of volunteerism through service in United State Marine Corps; and

WHEREAS, a member of America's "greatest generation," Edgar Harrell served with courage and gallantry during World War II, and deserves proper recognition for heroism both in the United States Marine Corps and in society today; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Harrell served as an Orderly to two different Captains, and in July, 1945, he was one of a small Marine Corps Detachment on board the USS *Indianapolis*, which had been dispatched from Tinian, where it had delivered the first operational atomic bomb to the B-29 base on Tinian, to Guam and then to Leyte Gulf to join the U.S. fleet then preparing to invade Japan; and

WHEREAS, the USS *Indianapolis* had served as the flagship of the Fifth Fleet under Admiral Raymond Spruance and of the Third Fleet under Admiral William F. Halsey, and received ten Battle Stars for her service as an anti-shipping, anti-air and invasion supporting force as well as for her ability as a shore bombardment leader; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Harrell was aboard the USS *Indianapolis* during combat operations in the Pacific theater during the period in which she received seven campaign ribbons for the battles of Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Sea Battle of the Philippine Sea, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and three air strikes on Tokyo; and

WHEREAS, on June 30, 1945, the USS *Indianapolis* was sunk by an enemy torpedo and went down, the last capital ship lost in World War II; approximately 900 of the original 1,196 crew members survived the initial attack, but after five days only 317 survived hypothermia, severe dehydration, shark attack and other perils; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Harrell swam for four and one-half days with only a kapok life jacket, witnessing his group of eighty survivors being cut in half by the second day, dwindling to seventeen by the third day at noon, and only to himself and one other man halfway into the fifth day when they were rescued; he earned a Purple Heart as a result; and

WHEREAS, born in 1924 in Trigg County, Kentucky, Edgar Harrell returned to Kentucky after the war and attended college at Murray State; he went on to a career as a distributor with Pella Windows; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, Mr. Harrell moved to Henry County to retire, where he is a member of First Baptist Church and is a board member for Covenant Home; and

WHEREAS, committed to family values of the highest order, Edgar Harrell enjoys the love and companionship of his childhood sweetheart and wife of 57 years, Ola Mae Cathey Harrell; they are the proud parents of son, David Harrell and daughter, Cathey Tierney and the doting grandparents of eight and great grandparents of four; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harrell and his son David, an ordained Baptist minister, collaborated on a book written by David, *Out of the Depths*; Edgar Harrell has traveled to fourteen states speaking to schools, churches and civic groups detailing his riveting story of survival, political intrigue and faith in the providence of God; and

WHEREAS, the valorous service, will to survive, and faith in his Creator demonstrated by Edgar Harrell in World War II and throughout his life are worthy of our recognition and praise; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Edgar Harrell of Henry County for meritorious service in the United State Marine Corps during World War II, offer our thanks for a difficult job well done, and salute his life of commitment and purpose.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we offer Mr. Harrell our best wishes for every success and satisfaction in all his future endeavors and much happiness in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.